

TENNESSEE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FISCAL REVIEW COMMITTEE



FISCAL MEMORANDUM

HB 517 – SB 1074

March 25, 2013

SUMMARY OF ORIGINAL BILL: Requires that a child advocacy center (CAC) conduct the initial forensic interview with a child who is an alleged victim of child sexual abuse. If any subsequent interviews are found necessary by the child protective team, then the team will seek to interview the child in a neutral setting other than where the alleged abuse occurred.

FISCAL IMPACT OF ORIGINAL BILL:

Increased State Expenditures - \$140,000

SUMMARY OF AMENDMENT (005430): Deletes all language after the enacting clause. Requires the Department of Children's Services (DCS) to conduct an initial safety interview with a child who is an alleged victim of child sexual abuse or severe abuse. If a forensic interview is required, then DCS must refer the case to a child advocacy center (CAC) to perform the initial forensic interview. When the CAC receives notification of the need for a forensic interview, the CAC must provide law enforcement notification of the case and the date and time of the interview. DCS is required to be present at the CAC interview. Law enforcement is required to be at the interview, if possible. The forensic interview shall be conducted while the department is present and may be conducted without law enforcement being present. If subsequent interviews are found necessary by the child advocacy center, then the interviews must be performed by the CAC.

FISCAL IMPACT OF BILL WITH PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Unchanged from the original fiscal note.

Assumptions for the bill as amended:

- Under current law, the child protective team is required to seek to interview the child in a neutral setting, other than where the alleged abuse occurred, whenever possible.
- According to the Department of Children's Services (DCS), 8,826 forensic interviews were conducted in child advocacy centers statewide and 9,698 allegations of sexual

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abuse were investigated in calendar year 2012. Of the total allegations, 872 investigations of alleged child sexual abuse did not involve a forensic interview (9,698 allegations – 8,826 forensic interviews).

- According to DCS, one forensic interviewer will work 230 cases of alleged child sexual abuse. Four additional forensic interviewers will be required at the CACs (872 allegations / 230 cases).
- In order for CACs to comply with the bill's requirements, DCS will fund a portion of each new forensic interviewer's salary and benefits. According to DCS, the state contribution will be \$35,000 per investigator. The total increase in expenditures will be \$140,000.

CERTIFICATION:

The information contained herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lucian D. Geise', is positioned above the printed name.

Lucian D. Geise, Executive Director

/ehu